



Ips Bark Beetles & Storm-Damaged Trees

What are Ips Bark Beetles?

Ips bark beetles—also known as engraver beetles—are common pests in southeastern pine forests. The four main species are:

- Six-spined Ips (*Ips calligraphus*).
- Eastern five-spined Ips (*Ips grandicollis*).
- Small southern pine engraver (*Ips avulsus*).
- Pine engraver (*Ips pini*).

These beetles typically target **stressed, injured, or weakened trees**. Ips outbreaks are generally not a concern in healthy pine stands.

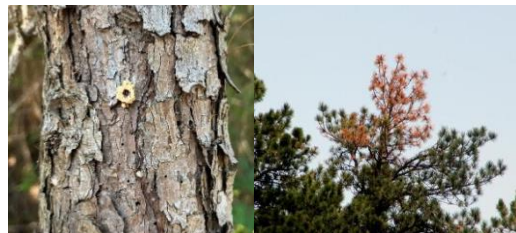


Ips galleries under the bark

Recognizing Ips Attacks

Look for:

- **Branch flagging** (faded or dead branches).
- **Yellowing crowns** that progress to red and brown.
- **Small round exit holes** (~1/16 inch).
- **Fine sawdust** around the base of trees or on bark.
- Galleries under bark shaped like **“I,” “H,” or “Y.”**



Ips exit holes and orange crown

Unlike the more aggressive southern pine beetle (SPB), Ips damage is usually minimal unless compounded by large-scale stress such as drought or storm damage.

Storm Damage & Ips Infestations

Storm events such as **hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, and lightning strikes** create ideal conditions for Ips outbreaks. Trees damaged by wind, breakage, or flooding are more susceptible because:

- Injuries signal to beetles that a tree is vulnerable.
- Broken limbs, wounds, and logging slash serve as breeding material.
- Ips beetles can rapidly increase in numbers, sometimes killing multiple trees.





Best Management Practices After Storms

1. **Promptly Remove Storm-Damaged Trees**
Salvage or remove damaged trees quickly to reduce Ips infestations and protect surrounding healthy trees. Minimize damaging and skinning residual trees during the salvage operations.
2. **Slash Management**
Avoid leaving large piles of slash or woody debris near standing trees. Spread slash evenly or chip/burn where feasible and keep burn piles away from residual trees.
3. **Minimize Soil Disturbance**
Heavy machinery compacts soil and damages roots, increasing stress and susceptibility to beetles.
4. **Thinning & Stand Health**
Maintain appropriate stocking levels through timely thinning. Avoid thinning during or immediately after droughts or storms when trees are most vulnerable.

Management Recommendations

- Insecticide treatments (e.g., carbaryl, permethrin, emamectin benzoate) used as a preventative in non-infested trees may protect high-value **individual trees**, but are **not practical for large-scale use**.
- Once a tree shows symptoms, chemical treatments **cannot save it**.
- If Ips beetle damage is minimal, it may be best to let the infestation run its course without intervention.
- If tree mortality is significant, **removal of affected trees** or a **partial stand harvest** may be necessary. **Avoid damage to healthy residual trees**.

Key Takeaways

- Ips beetles are secondary pests - they exploit damage from **storms, drought, poor management, or other stressors**.
- Healthy, well-managed stands are the **best defense**.
- After severe weather, **monitor stands closely** and act quickly to remove damaged material.
- **Avoid injuring trees** during management activities, such as harvesting, road work, mowing, etc.

For more information, contact your **local Georgia Forestry Commission Forester** or go online to GaTrees.org.